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DIGITAL DICTIONARIES APPLICATION FOR THE INCREASE OF PROFESSIONAL ENGLISH COMPETENCE OF ACADEMIC SEEKERS MAJORING FOR SPECIALTY 293 "INTERNATIONAL LAW"

Annotation. The actuality of ongoing research witnesses that online dictionaries play a crucial role in teaching legal English by helping students understand and define legal terms, enhancing their writing skills through grammar and collocation checks, and improving their translation abilities for legal texts. By offering features such as personalized word lists and contextual examples, these tools promote independent learning and give students the chance to practice skills like drafting and revising legal documents. The purpose of the research in to demonstrate the benefits of application of on – line dictionaries for increase in professional English competence of academic seekers majoring for specialty 293 "International Law", in particular achieving it to fulfill such two tasks as follows: analyse the sufficient advantages of digital dictionary usage within educational process at modern universities and present the list of legal terminology that might be compiled by means of on – line dictionaries usage during teaching the discipline "Foreign Language of the Specialty". The research outcomes have highlighted the following benefits for academic seekers, including the ones: access to specialized terminology: Online legal dictionaries help connect general English with specialized legal vocabulary by offering definitions and explanations for complex terms; improved writing: they aid students in using grammar and specific legal phrases correctly, which is essential for tasks like drafting legal documents, notes, or summaries; enhanced translation skills: Students can utilize online dictionaries and other resources like parallel corpora to translate legal texts from their native language to English and vice versa, ensuring both factual and linguistic accuracy; support for autonomous learning: Online tools allow students to take charge of their learning. They can create personalized word lists and access resources whenever they need them, which fosters independent study and motivation. Key features for using dictionaries effectively; contextual data: Good dictionaries do more than just give definitions; they also provide details about grammar and common word pairings, which helps students learn how to use words correctly in sentences; multi – level information: Some dictionaries are made to offer various levels of information based on what the user needs, ranging from simple definitions for beginners to more detailed info for advanced users; comprehensive resources: Students often rely on a mix of monolingual, bilingual, legal, and general – purpose online dictionaries to tackle their language challenges; personalization: tools like personal word lists help students monitor their progress and concentrate on the vocabulary they find most difficult. The research has concluded that that bilingual dictionaries and online dictionaries lead to increase in acquiring legal English competence by academic seekers majoring for specialty 293 "International Law", so their application is highly recommended during teaching university disciplines.

Keywords. Digital dictionaries; Cambridge Legal Dictionary; benefits and advantages; law terminology; academic seekers; specialty 293 "International Law"; university curriculum; glossary list of legal terminology.

Introduction

Dictionaries have always been seen as a crucial tool in second language learning. Clearly, dictionaries can help improve learners' performance in both understanding and using the language. For example, students can refer to dictionaries when they come across unfamiliar words in the target language, allowing them to grasp their meanings more effectively (Digital Agenda for Europe, 2022).

Additionally, learners can search for the right words to convey their ideas or discover the correct uses of new words while writing and speaking. In this way, dictionaries act as a helpful resource that aids learners in better understanding or using words (Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment (2017).

The study of students' verbal protocols indicates that they can use seven different strategies for looking up words, either on their own or together, to figure out the meanings of target words. Their lookup results show a high accuracy rate, as they usually understand the correct meanings of words based on the reading context (Pearson, 2025).

Despite the generally positive findings about students' lookup skills, when comparing proficient readers to independent readers, it becomes clear that proficient readers are more inclined to use context fitting as a strategy.

This helps them achieve the main goal of improving reading comprehension, while independent readers often focus solely on the lookup process without considering the reading context (Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment (2017).

Literature Analysis

Regarding dictionaries as a tool for academic seekers, Scholfield (1999) notes that they are primarily used for receptive purposes, mainly helping learners understand the meanings of unfamiliar words while reading.

During this process, incidental vocabulary learning can occur as learners intentionally focus on the target words when they use the dictionary (). This means that learning new words often happens as a side effect of their reading activities. Consequently, the lookup process is centered around meaning, and it's not surprising that learners typically check L2 definitions or L1 translations in the entries, rather than looking at grammatical or collocational features that would be more beneficial for productive use.

These ideas were supported by a large – scale survey carried out by Fan (2000). This survey gathered information from over 1000 first – year students across seven higher education institutions in Hong Kong. The findings reveal that students primarily use dictionaries to verify the contextual meanings of unfamiliar words, confirming that accessing semantic information in the dictionary is the most crucial function for users. This also shows that learners tend to use dictionaries more for receptive purposes rather than for productive ones (Dubois, 2021).

Even though many people think that dictionaries can help with L2 learning, their usefulness is still questionable because there are many negative opinions about how they are used. Consequently, some investigators point out that both teachers and students have an overly positive view of dictionary use. Teachers believe that students can use dictionaries easily, while students think they will always understand word meanings when they see examples in the dictionary. This doubt comes from the fact that using a dictionary can involve several complicated steps.

First, learners must decide if they can guess the meaning of a word from the context or if they need to look it up in a dictionary. Then, they have to remember the context to pick the right meaning from the various definitions listed. Finally, they need to fit the chosen meaning back into the reading context to see if it makes sense. Since this whole process is not as straightforward as one might think, there is a high chance of making mistakes, which can reduce the effectiveness of this learning tool (Modern Teaching: Methods and Skills, 2024).

The role of dictionaries is becoming less significant due to the rise of the communicative approach. As this method becomes more common in language education, dictionaries are recommended less to students, who are instead encouraged to figure out the meanings of unfamiliar words using context clues. Supporters of this method argue that it helps students avoid getting sidetracked by their native language while searching for meanings, allowing them to concentrate more on the target language. Additionally, communicative language teaching promotes risk – taking among learners, such as guessing the meanings of unknown words to solve language challenges (Modern Teaching: Methods and Skills, 2024).

Since this perspective conflicts with the idea of seeking precise information from dictionaries, it ultimately reduces their importance in second language learning.

Ultimately, using a dictionary is still very important for learning a language.

This becomes especially important when we think about learning a second language (L2) over a long period of time.

Dictionaries can give deep insights into words in the target language, making them especially valuable in situations where there aren't enough native speakers to provide information in the first language (L1) (National Soft Skills Association (NASSA), 2022).

In this kind of situation, dictionaries are essential for ongoing L2 learning. Fan (2000) supports this idea and points out that dictionaries help learners to actively look at different parts of the target language when they can't pick up L2 naturally from their

environment. In these situations, dictionaries can serve as a key source of information and should definitely be suggested as a learning resource for L2 students.

The Purpose of Research

The purpose of the research in to demonstrate the benefits of application of on – line dictionaries for increase in professional English competence of academic seekers majoring for specialty 293 "International Law", in particular achieving it to fulfill such two tasks as follows: analyses the sufficient advantages of digital dictionary usage within educational process at modern universities and present the list of legal terminology that might be compiled by means of on – line dictionaries usage during teaching the discipline "Foreign Language of the Specialty".

Research Outcomes

In the algorithm of work on the formation of foreign language communicative competence of students, one of the first steps is familiarization with new lexical material. For this purpose, the teacher can use a number of techniques – translation, illustration, use of realities, definitions, facial expressions and gestures, graphs and scenarios (Digital Agenda for Europe, 2022).

An indispensable resource in this case is a high – quality online dictionary of the explanatory type, which will be useful to the teacher for preparing definitions of new lexical units, selecting synonyms, antonyms, illustrative context, grammatical forms, etc., and will help students in a comprehensive acquaintance with new lexemes. Both bilingual and monolingual dictionaries can be used in teaching English and in its independent study (Digital Agenda for Europe, 2022).

Bilingual dictionaries are suitable for autonomous use in the early stages of learning a foreign language, because relying on knowledge of the native language greatly simplifies the acquisition of new vocabulary and the processing of reference information about it. However, monolingual dictionaries contribute to the creation of a foreign language environment and the natural acquisition of a foreign language, their use is highly recommended for students, because they not only provide a quick search for language units, but also contribute to the development of critical thinking and linguistic inference (Cambridge Learner's Dictionary, 2003).

Today, online dictionaries and applications are rapidly replacing the classic ones – paper ones. Virtual dictionaries are certainly much more convenient — you can find the word you need in a matter of seconds. In addition, there will be much more word meanings, synonyms, and examples of usage in the language in such dictionaries, since there are no volume restrictions. In addition, they are always at hand — on a phone or laptop – and are often free – this is also their advantage.

However, online dictionaries, given their diverse information and numerous tabs, are difficult to use without proper practice. Therefore, a modern teacher must form student autonomy in this direction and equip students with the necessary skills that would help them quickly and effectively independently learn the necessary data from an online dictionary (Cambridge Learner's Dictionary, 2003).

Using online dictionaries while studying allows you to quickly look up word meanings, improve your vocabulary, check grammatical forms, and enrich your knowledge of the language. These tools are especially useful for understanding new terms and working with texts, as they offer quick searches, usage examples, and can even help with translations.

Advantages of using online dictionaries.

Quick access: You can instantly find the meaning of a word, synonyms, antonyms and examples of its use.

Vocabulary expansion: Help to learn new vocabulary, enriching your individual vocabulary.

Checking and correction: Make it possible to check texts for grammatical errors and correct spelling of words.

Language skills development: Promote better understanding of words, develop logical thinking and help operate with language when speaking, reading and writing (Cambridge Learner's Dictionary, 2003).

Working with new vocabulary: electronic dictionaries better reflect new words that appear in the language, since paper editions take longer to create.

How to use online dictionaries during study:

– Study the meaning of words: Look not only for the translation, but also for interpretations to better understand the meaning of the word in different contexts.

– Look for examples of usage: Pay attention to examples in sentences to understand how to use the word correctly.

– Use dictionaries for independent work: Do translations, analyze vocabulary and grammatical forms outside of class to better absorb the material.

– Use different resources: In addition to dictionaries, you can use online encyclopedias (such as Wikipedia) to learn new terms.

– Make your own dictionaries: Some services allow you to add your own translations and saved words, which helps you create your own "dictionary" (About Word Reference.com, 2025).

The main type of linguistic dictionaries is considered to be an explanatory dictionary. An explanatory dictionary is intended for interpreting the meaning of words, its role in studying the lexical system of a language is enormous. In an explanatory dictionary, you can get information about the lexical meaning of a word, learn about its mono-semantic/polysemous meaning, whether it has homonyms, find information about the main orthoepic, morphological, syntactic, stylistic characteristics of a word, examples of word usage.

Our experience in teaching foreign languages, in particular English, allows us to single out the most popular explanatory dictionaries among students of higher education institutions:

– *Oxford Dictionary of English (one of the most authoritative in the world);*

– *The Free Dictionary (an American online dictionary that provides information from various fields of knowledge);*

– *Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English (has many varieties);*

– *Longman Essential Activator (useful for expanding vocabulary);*

– *Macmillan English Dictionary for Advanced Learners (a comprehensive dictionary for gaining in – depth knowledge) (About Word Reference.com, 2025).*

The teacher's role in supporting students in reflected in:

– *Direct instruction on skills*: teachers need to give clear guidance on how to use online dictionaries effectively, as some students might only look up words without using that information to enhance their understanding and writing skills.

– *Integration into the curriculum*: online dictionaries and other digital resources can be woven into the curriculum to make learning more engaging and effective.

– *Structured practice*: teachers can design structured activities that require students to use online dictionaries, like writing a legal memo or analyzing a legal document.

Applying multiple digital dictionaries glossary list of the academic seekers majoring for specialty 293 "International Law" during study the discipline "Foreign Language of the Specialty" can be presented in the following interpretation:

– "3D printing, 5G communication, augmented and virtual reality – 3D друк, 5G зв'язок, доповнена та віртуальна реальність

– Additional paid leave or bonuses for workers and civil servants – Додаткова оплачувана відпустка або премії для працівників та державних службовців

– Advantages and positive aspects – Переваги та позитивні аспекти

– Boost the country's economy, including in the defense sector – Підвищити економіку країни, включаючи оборонний сектор

– Branches of the Armed Forces – Роди Збройних Сил

– Broad recognition of the importance and prospects of innovative activities – Широке визнання важливості та перспектив інноваційної діяльності

– Central Military Scientific Directorate of the General Staff of the Armed Forces of Ukraine – Центральне військово – наукове управління Генерального штабу Збройних Сил України

– Cluster initiatives – Кластерні ініціативи

– Collaboration, innovation clusters do not emerge spontaneously – Співпраця, інноваційні кластери не виникають спонтанно

– Common technologies and skills – Загальні технології та навички

– Conduct objective and qualified expertise within the decision – making system – Проводити об'єктивну та кваліфіковану експертизу в системі прийняття рішень

– Country's system of governance should play its leading and significant role – Система управління країни повинна відігравати провідну та значущу роль

– Creating competitive goods and services as a factor in enhancing defense capability and economic growth – Створення конкурентоспроможних товарів та послуг як фактор підвищення обороноздатності та економічного зростання

– Creating favorable conditions for those enterprises that implement advanced techniques and technologies – Створення сприятливих умов для тих підприємств, які впроваджують передові методи та технології

– Creating fiscal and other incentives to attract cluster residents – Створення фіскальних та інших стимулів для залучення резидентів кластерів

– Criteria for innovativeness – Критерії інноваційності

– Critical mass of clusters – Критична маса кластерів

– Cutting – edge product – Передовий продукт

– DARPA experience – Досвід Аге́нтства передови́х обороо́нних дослідни́цьких проєктів

– Defense and security – Оборона та безпека

– Defense procurement – Оборонні закупівлі (The Free Dictionary by Far Lex , 2025)

– Defense sector – Оборонний сектор (Сектор економіки, пов'язаний з виробництвом зброї та військової техніки.)

– Develop a project for the Concept of Stimulating and Forming Demand for Ukrainian Innovations – Розробити проект Концепції стимулювання та формування попиту на українські інновації

– Development of economic activity, ensuring the economic stability of the state and defense – Розвиток економічної діяльності, забезпечення економічної стабільності держави та оборони

– Development of national innovations – Розвиток національних інновацій

– Direct state intervention – Пряме державне втручання

– Diversification of tools to support and stimulate science in general – Диверсифікація інструментів підтримки та стимулювання науки загалом

– Economic clustering – Економічне кластерування

– Economic progress – Економічний прогрес

– Economic system – Економічна система

– Elevate the level of innovation culture – Підвищити рівень інноваційної культури

– Engage in scientific and scientific – technical activities – Займатися науковою та науково – технічною діяльністю

– Engaging and popularizing inventive, rationalizing activities, and scientific work – Залучення та популяризація винахідницької, раціоналізаторської діяльності та наукової роботи

– Enhance the competitiveness of the domestic economy and ensuring national security – Підвищити конкурентоспроможність вітчизняної економіки та забезпечення національної безпеки

– Enhance the prestige of scientific workers – Підвищити престиж наукових працівників

– Enhancing competitiveness and development – Підвищення конкурентоспроможності та розвитку

– Ensure the coherence of state policy in the field of invention, rationalization, scientific work – Забезпечити узгодженість державної політики у сфері винахідництва, раціоналізації, наукової роботи

– Environmentally friendly technologies – Екологічно чисті технології

– Explanatory work, advertising, increasing the number of informational events – Роз'яснювальна робота, реклама, збільшення кількості інформаційних заходів

– External economic integration issues – Проблеми зовнішньої економічної інтеграції (The Free Dictionary by Far Lex , 2025)

– Federal level support – Підтримка на федеральному рівні

– Federal Task Force on Regional Innovation Clusters – Федеральна робоча група з регіональних інноваційних кластерів

– Framework agreements – Рамкові угоди

– Free education in universities for children – Безкоштовна освіта в університетах для дітей

– Fundamental element of cooperation – Основний елемент співпраці

– Fundamental research and its implementation – Фундаментальні дослідження та їх впровадження

– Fundamentally alter processes in manufacturing and construction, trade and logistics, education and knowledge accumulation – Фундаментально змінювати процеси у виробництві та будівництві, торгівлі та логістиці, освіті та накопиченні знань*" (*Law.Com: Legal Dictionary, 2025*).*

Conclusions and Recommendations

Even though these studies might focus on various kinds of electronic dictionaries, the benefits they highlight are usually applicable to all types. In particular, online dictionaries are highly recommended because they are often free for learners and are regularly updated (Modern Teaching: Methods and Skills, 2024).

Given that these benefits are much broader and significantly surpass the drawbacks, we can conclude that electronic dictionaries, especially online ones, serve as a more effective learning resource compared to traditional paper dictionaries.

Even with the debates surrounding the effectiveness of using dictionaries and their potential drawbacks on developing reading skills, dictionaries still play a crucial role in learning. They can effectively aid in understanding texts, building vocabulary, and supporting lifelong education. This highlights the significance of the current research, which looks into how well learners perform when using dictionaries.

The findings that bilingual dictionaries and online dictionaries are more effective lead this study to explore how learners utilize online bilingual dictionaries because of their success in second language learning (Pearson, 2025).

Although earlier research has shown that dictionary strategies can be classified based on timing, mental processes, or knowledge, these classifications don't accurately show how learners actually use dictionary strategies to grasp unfamiliar words. This indicates that the reasoning behind categorizing lookup strategies should focus on how learners interpret word meanings while searching.

In line with how past researchers have examined participants' thought processes regarding dictionary strategies, this study employs the think – aloud method to allow direct observation of participants' thoughts during their lookup processes.

To sum up, this study aims to look into the dictionary lookup strategies used by academic seekers majoring for specialty 293 "International Law", focusing on their use of online bilingual dictionaries through a think – aloud method. By figuring out how these students use the dictionary for reading and the challenges they face, the study seeks to address the main questions about whether the current teaching methods need to be changed. This is important so that language teachers can meet the new requirements that academic seekers should have the essential dictionary skills for studying the discipline "Foreign Language of the Specialty".

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